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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 18 December 2014

[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/69/480)*]

69/141. Literacy for life: shaping future agendas

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 56/116 of 19 December 2001, by which it proclaimed the 10-year period beginning on 1 January 2003 the United Nations Literacy Decade, its resolution 57/166 of 18 December 2002, in which it welcomed the International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade,[1] and its resolutions 59/149 of 20 December 2004, 61/140 of 19 December 2006, 63/154 of 18 December 2008, 65/183 of 21 December 2010 and 68/132 of 18 December 2013,

Recalling also the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[2] in which Member States resolved to ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, would be able to complete a full course of primary schooling and that girls and boys would have equal access to all levels of education, which requires a renewed commitment to promote literacy for all,

Reaffirming the Education for All goals, in particular goal 3, on ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes, and goal 4, on achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults,

Convinced that literacy is crucial to the acquisition by every child, young person and adult of the essential life skills that will enable them to address the challenges that they may face in life and represents an essential condition of lifelong learning, which is an indispensable means for effective participation in the knowledge societies and economies of the twenty-first century,

Reaffirming the right of indigenous peoples to have non-discriminatory access to all levels and forms of education provided by States, and recognizing the importance of effective measures to promote access for indigenous individuals, in particular children, to education in their own language, whenever possible, as addressed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,[3]

[1] See A/57/218 and Corr.1.
[2] Resolution 55/2.
[3] Resolution 61/295, annex.

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Deeply concerned that, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 781 million adults do not have basic literacy skills and 58 million children of primary and 63 million children of secondary school age remain out of school, that an estimated 250 million children of primary school age are failing to acquire basic literacy skills, that millions more young people leave school without a level of literacy adequate for productive and active participation in their societies, that the issue of literacy may not be sufficiently high on national agendas to generate the kind of political and economic support required to address global literacy challenges and that the world is unlikely to meet those challenges if present trends continue,

Recognizing that literacy is a foundation for lifelong learning, a building block for achieving human rights and fundamental freedoms and a driver of sustainable development and that the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003–2012) had a catalytic effect as a global framework for sustained and focused efforts for the promotion of literacy and literate environments,

Welcoming the convening of the International Conference on Girls' and Women's Literacy and Education: Foundations for Sustainable Development, held in Dhaka and co-hosted by the Government of Bangladesh and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in support of the Global Education First Initiative and on the occasion of International Literacy Day, on 8 September 2014, and taking note with appreciation of the adoption of the Dhaka Declaration,

Taking note of the report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals,[4] which shall be the main basis for integrating sustainable development goals into the post-2015 development agenda, while recognizing that other inputs will also be considered, in the intergovernmental negotiation process at the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, and acknowledging that it includes a goal on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all with a stand-alone target on literacy,

Affirming that the realization of the right to education, especially for girls, contributes to the promotion of human rights, gender equality and the eradication of poverty, as well as to development,

Recognizing the importance of continuing to implement national programmes and measures to eliminate illiteracy worldwide as reflected in the Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All, adopted on 28 April 2000 at the World Education Forum,[5] and in the Millennium Development Goals, and in this regard also recognizing the important contribution of South-South and triangular cooperation through, inter alia, innovative pedagogical methods in literacy,

Deeply concerned about the persistence of the gender gap in education, which is reflected by the fact that, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, nearly two thirds of the world's non-literate adults are women,

Concerned that, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, one third of the children not attending school are children

[4] A/68/970 and Corr.1.

[5] See United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Final Report of the World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 26–28 April 2000* (Paris, 2000).

with disabilities and that the literacy rate among adults with disabilities is as low as 3 per cent in some countries,

Deeply concerned about the impact of disrupted educational services in humanitarian emergencies on efforts to promote literacy skills, especially for all children and young people,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the report of the Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization entitled "Literacy for life: shaping future agendas";[6]

2. *Commends* the efforts made by Member States, their development partners, the international donor community, the private sector, civil society and the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system, including the lead organization of the United Nations Literacy Decade, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in promoting the right to education, including by making progress on the goals of the Decade;

3. *Recognizes* the importance of continuing to implement national programmes and measures for everyone to acquire, use and advance literacy skills in order to eliminate illiteracy worldwide, enhancing further political and financial commitments, in particular for youth and adult literacy and non-formal education, intensifying collective efforts through enhanced education systems and interventions and building a robust knowledge and technical base through improved literacy monitoring, assessment and research;

4. *Calls upon* all Governments to develop reliable measures of literacy and generate data that are comparable across time and disaggregated by age, sex, disability, socioeconomic status, geographical location (urban/rural areas) and other relevant factors;

5. *Encourages* Member States, their development partners and the specialized agencies and other relevant organizations of the United Nations system, as appropriate, to sustain and expand the gains achieved during the Decade through improving the integration of literacy into sector-wide and multisectoral education and development strategies, expanding the provision of quality literacy programmes, enhancing education systems to provide quality basic education through schooling, enriching literate environments to allow people to acquire, use and advance literacy skills and promoting literacy for women and girls, as well as for marginalized groups, for their empowerment and inclusion in societies;

6. *Requests* the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to continue its coordinating and catalysing role in the fight against illiteracy, including in the context of the agenda for the period following the United Nations Literacy Decade, through developing Member States' capacities in the areas of policies, programme delivery and literacy assessments, scaling up literacy actions for girls and women, reinforcing innovative models of literacy delivery, including through information and communications technologies, and expanding the knowledge base and monitoring and evaluation, as well as advocating literacy on the global agenda and ensuring synergies between different actions, including through multi-stakeholder partnerships and networks;

[6] A/69/183.

7. *Encourages* efforts to provide education for all, especially for boys and girls, in humanitarian emergencies, including in order to contribute to a smooth transition from relief to development;

8. *Recognizes* the continued need to give appropriate consideration to the issue of literacy in the discussions on the post-2015 development agenda;

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-first session a report on the implementation of the present resolution;

10. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-first session, under the item entitled "Social development", the sub-item entitled "Literacy for life: shaping future agendas".

73rd plenary meeting
18 December 2014